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Vergil as a Republican

Aeneid 6.815-35

VERGIL AS A REPUBLICAN

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Even the most important works of world literature are subject to misinterpretation. As regards Vergil's three great poems, the aim both of the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics* has always been debated. However, it was assumed that one could be sure with respect to the *Aeneid*: Vergil was considered to be an adherent of the emperor Augustus, since in the *Divina Commedia* he is presented saying that he had lived *sotto il buon Augusto*.¹ After Vergil and Augustus had been thought to have spoken *una voce* for almost two thousand years, people suddenly seemed to hear 'two voices' and additionally even 'further voices'.² During the past twenty-five years the political significance of Vergil's *Aeneid* has been discussed with greater force than ever. As often happens, everything is reduced to black and white in this debate. In addressing this problem today, I will try to keep between the two extreme views which label Vergil either a court poet or a member of the opposition. And I do not want to let myself be distracted too much by the vast amount of secondary literature either, as it could not be properly dealt with here anyway.

The question to what extent Vergil was a Republican certainly is of great interest.³ The pageant of heroes in *Aeneid* 6 is remarkably full of allusions to a 'Republican' point of view. Wherever possible, it is advisable to compare the description of early Rome there with Livy's account written slightly earlier. Thus the view current at Vergil's time will emerge.

After dealing with Augustus in lines 788–807, Vergil continues with the kings, who were Romulus' successors, starting with Numa Pompilius and Tullus Hostilius. He then goes on to say (815–35):

Hard on him follows over-boastful Ancus, even now rejoicing overmuch in the people's breath. Wilt thou see, too, the Tarquin kings, and the proud soul of avenging Brutus, and the fasces regained? He shall be first

to win a consul's power and cruel axes, and when his sons stir up new war, the father, for fair freedom's sake, shall call them to their doom – unhappy he, howe'er posterity extol that deed! Yet love of country shall prevail, and boundless passion for renown. Nay, see apart the Decii and Drusi, and Torquatus of the cruel axe, and Camillus bringing home the standards. But they whom thou seest gleaming in equal arms, souls harmonious now, while wrapped in night, alas! if they but reach the light of life, what mutual war, what battles and carnage shall they arouse! the father coming down from Alpine ramparts, and the fortress of Monoecus, his daughter's spouse arrayed against him with the armies of the East. O my sons, make not a home within your hearts for such warfare, nor upon your country's very vitals turn her vigour and valour! And do thou first forbear, thou who drawest thy race from heaven; cast from thy hand the sword, thou blood of mine!⁴

- 815 quem iuxta sequitur iactantior Ancus
nunc quoque iam nimium gaudens popularibus auris.
vis et Tarquinius reges animamque superbam
ultoris Bruti fascisque videre receptos?
consulis imperium hic primus saevasque securis
820 accipiet, natosque pater nova bella moventis
ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit,
infelix, utcumque ferent ea facta minores:
vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido.
quin Decios Drusosque procul saevumque securi
825 aspice Torquatum et referentem signa Camillum.
illae autem paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis,
concordes animae nunc et dum nocte prementur,
heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae
attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt,
830 aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci
descendens, gener adversis instructus Eois!
ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella
neu patriae validas in viscera vertite viris;
tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,
835 proice tela manu, sanguis meus!

These lines obviously show the writer's distance from Caesar. Therefore closer inspection is justified. It will be of special interest whether the analysis leads to any consequences relating to the Princeps himself.

Aura popularis

The characterization of Ancus Marcius in lines 815–16 is not very favourable. There is no parallel to the remark that he was *iactantior* and *nimum gaudens popularibus auris*. Livy applies this metaphor to Appius Claudius in a negative sense. He says that Appius Claudius had taken on a new character in 452 BC, since he had suddenly become a

friend of the people and started courting their favour (*novum sibi ingenium induerat, ut plebicola repente omnisque aurae popularis captator evaderet*).⁵ Horace uses this metaphor in the same way when he talks about the swaying politician, who *sumit aut ponit securis | arbitrio popularis aurae*.⁶ One can either follow Norden's suggestion that this behaviour was a characteristic of Servius Tullius, who is not mentioned by Vergil, but said to *δημαγωγεῖν* and *θεραπεύειν* τοὺς ἀπόρους τῶν πολιτῶν by Dionysius of Halicarnassus,⁷ or Skutsch's suggestion⁸ that the king is equated with Ancus Poplicius mentioned by Dionysius,⁹ or Austin's suggestion¹⁰ that this expression points to a family story. In each case¹¹ Vergil must have had a special reason for characterizing this king in a negative way; after all, Caesar claimed to be a descendant of him by way of his aunt Julia.¹² In his *laudatio funebris* he had said according to Suetonius: *amitae meae Iuliae maternum genus ab regibus ortum... nam ab Anco Marcio sunt Marcii Reges, quo nomine fuit mater... est ergo in genere...sanctitas regum, qui plurimum inter homines pollent*.¹³ Binder called it a 'diskreten Hieb gegen Caesar'.¹⁴ That is the least thing to be admitted. Did Caesar raise himself above the senate with the help of the people? Was Augustus about to do the same? His 'ständige[s] Bemühen um das Wohlwollen der *plebs urbana* gerade in den Jahren nach 27'¹⁵ is strange at any rate.

Libertas

In antiquity already it was being discussed whether *anima superba* in line 817 refers to Brutus or to Tarquinius Superbus. The former possibility would be in line with the natural flow of the text, the latter involves assuming that the particle *-que* in line 818 occupies an unusual third place in the phrase. Servius explained the sentence thus: *unus enim de Tarquiniis fuit superbus*, Tiberius Donatus thus: *superbiae vitium Tarquinio applicatur secundum veterum fabulas, non Bruto*. Following Leo¹⁶ and Norden¹⁷ one could prefer this explanation from late antiquity in contrast to the modern *communis opinio*.¹⁸ However, if *anima superba* should refer to Brutus, the epithet *superba* certainly is positive, as it is in the rare cases of *Aeneid* 2.556 with reference to Priam (*superbum | regnatorem Asiae*) and of *Aeneid* 3.475 with reference to Anchises' marriage with Venus (*coniugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate superbo*). At any rate, Vergil does not show himself distanced from Brutus.¹⁹ On the contrary!

Lines 818–23 are in praise of the Brutus²⁰ who killed the tyrant in 510 BC; the Brutus who killed Caesar in 44 BC points to his relationship to him. Thus the parallel is clear enough. The elder Brutus is called *infelix* (822). In Vergil this epithet is mainly used for poor Dido. Brutus

is being praised, since he was the first consul, i.e., the founder of the Republic. Augustine noticed that Vergil praised the *infelix* man with great sympathy. He says: *quod factum Vergilius postea quam laudabiliter commemoravit, continuo clementer exhorruit. cum enim dixisset: natosque pater nova bella moventes | ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit, mox deinde exclamavit et ait: infelix, utcumque ferent ea facta minores. quomodolibet, inquit, ea facta posteri ferant, id est praeferant et extollant, qui filios occidit, infelix est. et tamquam ad consolandum infelicem subiunxit: vincit amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido.*²¹ One could assume that the deed of the elder Brutus was used to justify that of the younger. Can one go further? Was it possible for anyone living in 23 BC not to notice that someone was said to have made personal sacrifices *pulchra pro libertate*?²² Was this statement made, not only with reference to Caesar, but also to Augustus? In the description of Aeneas' shield the notion of *libertas* is also very important (8.646–51):

There, too, was Porsenna, bidding them admit the banished Tarquin, and hemming the city with mighty siege: the sons of Aeneas rushed on the sword for freedom's sake. Him thou mightest have seen like one in wrath, like one who threatens, for that Cocles dared to tear down the bridge, and Cloelia broke her bonds and swam the river.

nec non Tarquinius eiectum Porsenna iubebat
accipere ingentique urbem obsidione premebat:
Aeneadae in ferrum *pro libertate* ruebant,
illum indignanti similem similemque minanti
aspiceres, pontem auderet quia vellere Cocles
et fluvium vinclis innaret Cloelia ruptis.

The descendants of Aeneas rush into battle for the sake of liberty. Cocles and Cloelia opposed Porsenna who was threatening liberty. And what about Vergil's own time? What associations were there at that time? In his *Res gestae* Augustus had presented himself as a man providing liberty.²³ In fact, however, he had deprived the citizens of it. The only difficulty is to find out what people thought about this process. Syme was of the following opinion: 'There is something more important than political liberty; and political rights are a means, not an end in themselves. That end is security of life and property: it could not be guaranteed by the constitution of Republican Rome. Worn and broken by civil war and disorder, the Roman people was ready to surrender the ruinous privilege of freedom and submit to strict government.'²⁴ In his review Momigliano fiercely contradicted this view. He said: 'In our opinion, the truth is different; if we take the whole of the movement 80–27 BC, it may scarcely be doubted that in the Roman

Revolution leaders of a majority, who had no real political rights, dispossessed the senatorial class and the Roman People as a voting class. The Italians, who had obtained the Roman franchise, were destitute of real rights for lack of a representative system. The Romans lost their freedom because they had not shared it. They did not surrender their freedom for their own advantage: they were deprived of it.'²⁵

I do not want to interfere in a quarrel between scholars of ancient history, I would rather like to look at Livy, a contemporary of Vergil. In his description of the origin and growth of the Roman Republic (2.1–15) he uses the idea of *libertas* as a *leitmotif*. This fact rightly led Burck to speak of '*libertas-Erleben*'.²⁶ In Livy just as in Vergil, Brutus is an admirable and tragic figure, the representative of *libertas par excellence*. The expression of *pater liberator* (2.5.7) shows the tragedy in an especially obvious way. The following remark by H. Tränkle is true both for Vergil and for Livy: 'Dieses Wissen, daß jemand nicht nur in voller Übereinstimmung mit sich handeln, sondern auch zu einem Tun geführt werden kann, das ihn in Widerstreit mit seiner Neigung bringt, mag er es noch so sehr für unausweichlich halten, ist für Livius recht bezeichnend. ...die überlegene Macht des Schicksals läßt aus dem unerbittlich Handelnden einen tief Leidenden werden.'²⁷ Brutus is most similar to Aeneas, who has overcome himself.²⁸ Did Vergil have the impression that Caesar and Augustus did not overcome themselves for the sake of the people's *libertas*?

Livy's account is written slightly earlier than that of Vergil. He is quite likely to have still believed in Octavian's promise to restore *libertas*. Von Haehling thought that the use of the phrase *vindex libertatis* with reference to Brutus (2.1.8) was a direct allusion to Octavian/Augustus, since he is referred to by this title on a Cistophorus minted in Asia Minor in 28 BC.²⁹ But he also says that Brutus, called *deinde custos* [sc. *libertatis*] in the same context by Livy, is not to be equated with Augustus. Additionally, von Haehling closely analysed the passage 3.66–70, dealing with the war against the Volsci and Aequi in 446 BC. In this war the consul Agrippa Furius temporarily entrusted absolute power to T. Quinctius Capitolinus, his more experienced colleague. This analysis led von Haehling to the following interpretation: 'Brutus befreite das von der tyrannischen Willkür des letzten Königs unterdrückte Volk, durch seine einzigartige Tat legte er den Grundstein für die libera res publica. Auch Augustus' Wirken bildet einen Eckstein in der Entwicklung der römischen Geschichte, ihm ist es offensichtlich vorbehalten, die durch Parteienkämpfe und Bürgerkriege zerrüttete res publica wieder aufzurichten, auch wenn bei der

Wiederherstellung der *maiestas populi Romani* die Prinzipien der libera res publica vorübergehend außer Kraft gesetzt werden müssen. Nichts vermag den politischen Standort des Livius besser zu beschreiben als die Tatsache, daß er sich dagegen wehrt, Oktavian/Augustus auf eine Stufe mit Brutus zu stellen. ...Sein Urteil über den mächtigsten Mann seiner Zeit ist von einer gewissen Reserve geprägt. Bei aller Anerkennung seiner politischen Leistungen, der vorläufigen Beendigung der Bürgerkriege, bewahrt sich Livius eine innere Unabhängigkeit. Er sieht in Oktavian/Augustus nicht den alleinverantwortlichen Zerstörer der Freiheit, aber er *erhofft* sich von ihm – zum Zeitpunkt der Abfassung von III.66–70 – die langfristige Wiederherstellung der libera res publica.³⁰

Livy still hoped for the restoration of *libertas*. Was Vergil calling for the fulfilment of this promise a few years later? We know today that his calling was in vain. 'Man konnte...von Oktavian kein Verständnis für die aristokratische *libertas* erwarten und konnte von ihm nicht verlangen, daß er sich für eine libera res publica einsetzte, die er niemals selbst erlebt hat.'³¹

Pro re publica

Before dealing with Caesar directly, Anchises mentions outstanding representatives of the early Republic in lines 824–5, starting with the two Decii. *hi duo fuerunt, qui Mures dicti sunt, pater et filius. horum alter se bello Gallico, alter Samnitico vovit pro re publica.*³² These actions in 340 BC and 295 BC respectively were examples of self-sacrifice with great implications for posterity. The Decii are worthy companions of Brutus in this respect. The Drusi follow next in Anchises' account. According to Servius the main focus is on M. Livius Salinator (an ancestor of this family), who defeated Hasdrubal near the river Metaurus in 207 BC,³³ and additionally on Drusus, Livia's son, of whom Augustus expected a lot. Vergil is likely to be somewhat vague here on purpose. In Salinator's case Vergil could have thought of the following story transmitted by Suetonius: when Salinator was censor, he reproached all the tribes for their thoughtlessness in electing him consul a second time and also censor, although they had made him pay a penalty after his first consulship.³⁴ He, too, considered his personal affairs less important than the dignity of the state.³⁵ The next man pointed out by Anchises is Manlius Torquatus, whose mention recalls the war against the Latini in 340 BC. Like Brutus, he is an outstanding example of unselfishness. A single glance at Livy's account shows that this episode could make a strong appeal to the readers. *Disciplina militaris, qua stetit*

ad hanc diem Romana res,³⁶ was important for the consul Torquatus (as it was for the Great Elector) although his son (like the Prince of Homburg) was victorious after having set out contrary to commands. The father was brought into a dilemma (*necessitas*) and thus sentenced his son to death. Confirmation of the consuls' power was at stake (*sancienda...consulum imperia*, 8.7.19). For the sake of this the father made a great sacrifice. And what did Augustus do?

Finally Camillus appears in the pageant of heroes. It was well known that he recovered the gold offered to the Galli in 390 BC, because he decided on starting battle again.³⁷ What does *signa* refer to? Servius seems to be right who (maybe following Vergil) supplemented as follows: *Gallos iam abeuntes secutus est: quibus interemptis aurum omne recepit et signa*.³⁸ By reading Livy (and that is what Vergil perhaps did) one finds out that Camillus was about to resign from the dictatorship after his triumph and that he did not carry out his plan for the only reason that the senate implored him not to do so in the present unsafe situation, as the people were willing to move the capital to Veii.³⁹ He was able to prevent them from doing so by taking vigorous action. Even then he was allowed to resign only after he had completed his year in office: *ceterum primo* [sc. *urbs renata*], *quo adminiculo erecta erat, eodem innixa M. Furio principe stetit, neque eum abdicare se dictatura nisi anno circumacto passi sunt*.⁴⁰ Livy here calls Camillus *princeps*. As in other passages, the allusion to Augustus is very obvious. Being *diligentissimus religionum cultor*,⁴¹ he is *pius*, like Aeneas and Augustus.⁴² In his triumph he is praised by receiving the title *Romulus ac parens patriae conditorque alter urbis*,⁴³ thus 'a Roman reader of the 20's would be bound to feel their contemporary force'.⁴⁴ After Camillus has finally saved the city, he finally is 'allowed' to resign from dictatorship. And what did Augustus do? Was he a second Caesar?

Patriae in viscera

Then – with greatest frankness – Caesar and Pompey are mentioned as being representative of, even responsible for, terrible civil wars (826–35). The contrast with Brutus is most obvious. Brutus put up with personal disaster because his sons were about to start civil war (*nova bella*); Caesar and Pompey carry out what was prevented by Brutus. They are examples showing the opposite behaviour. One has to infer that the younger Brutus killed Caesar with full justice.

There are evil undertones in this passage. Caesar and Pompey are called *socer* and *gener*. Thereby 'Virgil has given Epic cachet to what was originally a gibe of the lampoonists'.⁴⁵ Comparable is the use of

these expressions by Catullus⁴⁶ and the author of the *Catalepton*⁴⁷ in the same negative context. These phrases were also used by Lucan⁴⁸ and Martial.⁴⁹ Austin put it very well by saying: 'the marriage-relationship between Caesar and Pompey added a special family *impietas* to the wider *impietas* of civil war'.⁵⁰ When Vergil talks about Caesar's route from Gaul to the civil war in Italy, he mentions the crossing of the Alps. Because of the accounts of Petronius⁵¹ and Lucan,⁵² Norden⁵³ arrived at the conclusion that this description was a topic of declamatory speeches and thus 'ein Seitenstück zu Hannibals Alpenübergang'.⁵⁴ What was appreciated by the orators for the sake of creating a good point for their story, was of political significance for Vergil: like Hannibal, Caesar was Italy's enemy!⁵⁵

Syme said about Anchises' direct address to Caesar in lines 834–5: 'Save for that veiled rebuke, no word of Caesar in all the epic record of Rome's glorious past.'⁵⁶ It is well known that Pompey was considered a representative of *libera res publica*. This fact probably is the reason why Vergil's Anchises does not ask both rivals to put down their weapons at the same time, but addresses Caesar first.⁵⁷ Perhaps one can go even further. Servius commented on *adsuescite bella* (832) in a remarkable way:

mire dictum: ab ipsis enim quasi consuetudinem fecit populus Romanus bellorum civilium. septies enim gesta sunt: ter a Caesare, contra Pompeium in Thessalia, contra eius filium Magnum in Hispania, item contra Iubam et Catonem in Africa: mortuo Caesare ab Augusto contra Cassium et Brutum in Philippis, civitate Thessaliae; Lucium Antonium in Perusia, Tusciae civitate; Sextum Pompeium in Sicilia; Antonium et Cleopatram in Epiro.⁵⁸

Norden had firmly rejected the view 'daß die Rezitation dieser Verse den Kaiser verletzt haben könnte wegen des von ihm selbst gegen Antonius geführten Bürgerkriegs'.⁵⁹ How could Augustus have reacted differently? Was he not bound to be annoyed about being connected with the 'destroyer of the Republic'? Was it even intended that he was annoyed?

'Republicanism'

The pageant of heroes as a whole demonstrates 'outspoken republicanism'.⁶⁰ It manifests itself in praise of the old Republic on the one hand and distance from Caesar, threatening the Republic in more recent times, on the other. Like Livy, Vergil was a 'Republican'.⁶¹ A brief analysis of the structure of Anchises' prophecy will make clear that the extract dealt with here has not been chosen at random. In lines 756–816 the pre-republican time is described, with lines 781–807

looking forward to later Rome and Augustus. (It certainly is tempting to think of Augustus as a second founder in the manner of the first king. However, is it of greater significance that he appears – as ‘rex’ – among the *reges*?⁶²) In lines 817–35 and lines 836–46 heroes of the Republic are presented, outstanding in ‘internal affairs’ and ‘external affairs’ respectively.⁶³ Lines 826–35 (separated by *autem*) are looking forward to the time of the degenerate representatives Pompey and Caesar. It is worth noting that Caesar and Pompey, who were also very successful in external affairs, appear as sinners with regard to internal affairs.⁶⁴

As soon as one has introduced the term ‘Republican’ as referring to Vergil, the mention of Cato of Utica, the ‘Republican *par excellence*’, as judge of the dead in the description of Aeneas’ shield gains special significance. For it is he of all people who is contrasted with the revolutionary Catilina in his capacity as a positive figure (with assonance of their names) (8.666–70):

Away from these he adds also the abodes of Hell, the high gates of Dis, the penalties of sin, and thee, Catiline, hanging on a frowning cliff, and trembling at the faces of the Furies; far apart, the good, and Cato giving them laws.

hinc procul addit
Tartareas etiam sedes, alta ostia Ditis,
et scelerum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci
pendentem scopulo Furiarumque ora trementem,
secretosque pios, his dantem iura Catonem.

Cato becomes even more important, since he and Catilina are the only people to be mentioned of those who lived between early Rome and the time of Augustus. And Cato is ‘the implacable opponent of Julius Caesar and the uncompromising champion of the lost cause of the Republic’.⁶⁵ How many levels of meaning are contained in these lines? The following ways of understanding them are all possible:

1. Catilina is being used as a negative example. Why is it he of all people who is being mentioned? For it is known that Caesar was sympathetic with the movement started by him although Sallust tried very hard to conceal it.
2. Servius says about this passage that *hoc quasi in Ciceronis gratiam dictum videtur*. But during the last phase Cicero was a firm opponent of Caesar.⁶⁶
3. Binder recognized ‘diskrete Kritik an Caesar’⁶⁷ because Cato won the debate in the senate about the punishment of the Catilinarians and Caesar’s opponent now sees his demands fulfilled in Tartarus.

4. The mention of the Republican *par excellence* speaks for itself.
5. Vergil makes Cato *iura dare*,⁶⁸ an activity which is carried out by outstanding figures only.⁶⁹

In the section of Anchises' speech dealt with here Vergil has mentioned both positive and negative aspects. Norden explained this remarkable circumstance by rhetorical theories, which demand both ἐγκώμιον and ψόγος,⁷⁰ as well as by the 'antike Schicklichkeitsgefühl'. Thus he played its importance down: 'Wir werden also schon aus diesem allgemeinen Grunde die Ansicht einzelner Kritiker nicht teilen, die die Erwähnung des Bürgerkriegs 826 ff. nicht passend finden, und dem Dichter unsere Anerkennung zollen, daß er von König Ancus lieber eine entlegene, diesem abgünstige Legende benutzt (815 f.), statt sich mit einem wohlfeilen Lob zu begnügen, und daß er die Tat des Brutus (822 f.) nicht im Fanfarenstil der Rhetorik gepriesen hat.'⁷¹ One gets the impression that a certain helplessness manifests itself when the use of rhetorical devices is approved of at one time and their omission is commended at another.

It is appropriate to ask what follows from Vergil's distance from Caesar and his praise of Cato with regard to his relationship to Augustus. In Lucan, Vergil's most important successor in epic poetry, distance from Caesar and praise of Cato reappear, greatly intensified. Lucan's rejection of Caesar doubtless implies the rejection of Nero. Does Vergil's distance from Caesar imply distance from Augustus? Was it consistent with Augustus' wishes that Vergil wrote poetry in a 'Republican' manner and that he declared himself a 'Republican'?

In 36 BC Octavian had promised *rem publicam restituere*. As *princeps*, he had propagated that he had kept his promise by talking of the *res publica restituta* as a matter of course. Forced by political necessity, Augustus presented himself as a Republican. In overcoming the Republic he had to keep largely to its formal organisation. Due to this way of proceeding he had to keep his distance from Caesar and to praise Cato. Syme said that in his youth Augustus overthrew the Republic, in his mature years the statesman stole its heroes and its vocabulary.⁷² He even claimed to have brought the country to freedom: *rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi*.⁷³ The idea of *rem publicam in libertatem vindicare* could also have been a maxim of Cato, but in a sense different from the sense it had with Augustus.⁷⁴ The meaning of *libertas* in Cato's, Livy's and Vergil's minds was different from what Augustus thought it to be.

Topicality

Vergil was not able to publish the *Aeneid*, but he wrote the sixth Book (like all the others) believing that he would do so. However, he made slow progress because he was very precise and always mindful of corrections when writing. It had taken him very long to finish the *Georgics*; Servius says that it was seven years, and if he is right in assuming that the *laudes Galli* at the end of *Georgics* 4 were eliminated, it will be even more than ten years. So Vergil can hardly ever have hoped to finish the *Aeneid* in a shorter period of time. It is not speculative to say that Vergil, when writing *Aeneid* 6, did not think of finishing the *Aeneid* as a whole until, let's say, 15 bc. Supposing that Anchises' prophecy in *Aeneid* 6 was 'eine Mahnung für die Gegenwart', as Norden put it:⁷⁵ what points would there be on account of which Vergil could admonish Augustus? Would Augustus still be alive, would he be willing to change anything? Would it not be too late? But the situation is different if one takes into account recitations during the process of composition. In the *vita* by Suetonius and Donatus recitations are mentioned several times, particularly with reference to *Aeneid* 6: *cui* [sc. Augusto]...*tres omnino libros recitavit, secundum quartum sextum, sed hunc notabili Octaviae adfectione, quae, cum recitationi interesset, ad illos de filio suo versus: 'tu Marcellus eris' [Aen. 6.883] defecisse fertur atque aegre focolata <esse>*.⁷⁶ This allusion is relevant to the year 23 bc. Vergil did not only recite parts of his works quite often, but also very well: *pronuntiabat autem cum suavitate, cum lenociniis miris*, as Suetonius⁷⁷ says; *nam recitavit voce optima*, as Servius⁷⁸ says. Anchises' prophecy was a piece especially appropriate for being recited on its own. Norden, influenced by Tiberius Donatus, has pointed out the rhetorical character of this passage and said 'daß die Helden Vergils die typischen der Rhetorenschule sind'.⁷⁹ He also thought about the effect the recitation might have had on Augustus.⁸⁰ Goold was of the opinion that 'the Pageant, that is the speech of Anchises 756–853', was especially appropriate for recitation.⁸¹

Horace's *Odes* are also thought to have been recited.⁸² Among the odes recited there probably were not only poems addressed to friends, but also poems of political significance. The 'Roman Odes' are very likely to have become widely known before 23 bc. These odes, too, are not really in praise of the monarch, but rather an attempt to place him under an obligation in public. *Ode* 2.10, probably recited in the same year as *Aeneid* 6, is an especially remarkable example if the Licinius addressed is Licinius Murena, consul in 23 bc.⁸³ A recitation of this poem among the appropriate people did not only imply an appeal to

Augustus to be merciful, but also to Licinius to be moderate.⁸⁴

A 'Mahnung für die Gegenwart' (in Norden's words) had its greatest impact when the poem was recited. Because of the present situation in 23 BC a special reason was offered: Augustus' government had entered a state of crisis because – among other things – Murena's conspiracy was discovered. That year 'certainly' was 'the most critical, in all the long Principate of Augustus'.⁸⁵ In 27 BC Octavian had resigned from his special powers and Republican rule could have started again. But the senate did not allow Octavian to resign, just as it had once done in Camillus' case. In 23 BC there was a comparable situation: Augustus resigned from the consulship after he had held this office continuously since 31 BC (however, he got *tribunicia potestas annua et perpetua* and *imperium proconsulare maius* in exchange). This period was a 'Republican phase'. L. Sestius became the successor to the consul Augustus; he was 'ein alter Republikaner, der einst an der Seite des Brutus gekämpft hatte und noch immer dessen Andenken in Ehren hielt'.⁸⁶ Gn. Calpurnius Piso became the successor to the consul Murena; he was 'a Republican of independent and recalcitrant temper'.⁸⁷ Augustus' aim was 'die Meinung der republikanischen Kreise des Senats zu gewinnen'.⁸⁸ Who knows whether the senate would have allowed him to resign this time, just as it once did in Camillus' case?

I do not want to argue that Vergil wished something like that; I would simply like to suggest that the passage analysed contains a 'personal voice' against the background of discussions about the 'Republic' in 23 BC. For at that time many people were asking for more Republican elements in Rome's political organisation than Augustus claimed to offer.

Notes

* I wish to express my gratitude to Gesine Manuwald for her kind help with translating this article.

¹ Dante, *Inf.* 1.71.

² Lyne (1987).

³ The following remarks are a new version of a passage in an older article of mine (1983a, 29–33), the present article being more comprehensive and taking recent research into account.

⁴ This translation and the following ones of 8.646–51 and of 8.666–70 are taken from the Loeb edition. In this edition, however, *animam superbam* in lines 8.817–18 is construed in a way different from that of the present author.

⁵ Livy 3.33.7.

⁶ Horace, *Carm.* 3. 2.19–20.

⁷ Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 4.8.3.

⁸ Skutsch (1972) 14–16.

⁹ Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 3.34.3.

¹⁰ Austin ad loc.

¹¹ Cf. Feeney (1986) 9–10, for other suggestions. Horsfall (1995) 149, thinks of an ‘error’.

¹² By the way, Augustus was also related to Ancus Marcius: L. Marcius Philippus (consul in 56 BC) was his mother’s second husband.

¹³ *Div. Iul.* 6.1. Cf. Grimal (1954) 47.

¹⁴ Binder (1971) 207. ‘Le vers ne pouvait manquer d’évoquer les Lupercalia de 44 et la démagogie césarienne, qui se complaisait aux acclamations de la populace.’ (Grimal (1954) 47).

¹⁵ Kienast (1982) 86 (with bibliography).

¹⁶ Leo (1895) 429 n. 3.

¹⁷ Norden ad 812 f.

¹⁸ According to Austin (1977) 251, Sabbadini and Geymonat also prefer the explanation from antiquity.

¹⁹ Knight’s (1932) interpretation of this passage is completely wrong. He says that Brutus has a ‘tyrant soul’ (Conway (1932) basically agrees); therefore it is ‘the extreme republicans, the enemies of Aeneas and Augustus, who are *superbi*’. Zetzel’s interpretation (1989, 282) also misses the point. He terms it a ‘failure’ that ‘Brutus is overcome by *laudum immensa cupido*’.

²⁰ Cf. Kraggerud’s important interpretation (1995, 62–7). His result is as follows: ‘die Rechtmässigkeit der Tat des Brutus’ (Norden) ‘is in no way questioned or undermined’ (66).

²¹ Augustine, *C.D.* 3.16.

²² Brutus ‘stellt die Freiheit der Republik über sein persönliches Glück’, Glei (1991) 172.

²³ See below.

²⁴ Syme (1939) 513.

²⁵ Momigliano (1940) 80.

²⁶ Burck (1934) 52; cf. 53: he says that Livy puts ‘in bewußter Bindung an seinen thematischen Leitsatz den Nachdruck auf die Gefühle der Zuschauer, die den Verrat der Patrizier an der *libertas* nicht begreifen können (5, 7).’

²⁷ Tränkle (1965) 329.

²⁸ Cf. Lefèvre (1983b) 39. Glei (1991, 172) notices a ‘typologische Verbindung’ between Vergil’s Brutus and Aeneas.

²⁹ Von Haehling (1989) 209.

³⁰ Von Haehling (1989) 209–10 (*italics mine*).

³¹ Kienast (1982) 18.

³² Servius on 822.

³³ It is plausible that the main focus is on this man since all the others mentioned besides are heroes of the early Republic.

³⁴ *Salinator universas tribus in censura notavit levitatis nomine, quod, cum se post priorem consulatum multa inrogata condemnasset, consulem iterum censoremque fecissent* (Suet., *Tib.* 3.2). After his triumph *de Illyriis* Salinator was convicted of having distributed the booty unjustly.

³⁵ Austin (ad loc.) assumes that ‘primary reference’ is made to M. Livius Drusus, the famous tribune plebis of 91 BC, who became ‘Gracchus der

Aristokratie' according to Mommsen (*Röm. Gesch.* 2.217). If this suggestion is true, another person who has set himself 'uneigennützige' tasks (domestic affairs and the problem of how to deal with the allies) is mentioned here (H.G. Gundel, *Der Kleine Pauly*, II (1975) 169). His being murdered in his own house was a source for topics in the schools of rhetoric. The Auctor ad Herennium mentions one of them (4.31): *tuus, o Druse, sanguis domesticos parietes et voltum parentis aspersit*. Feeney's interpretation (1986, 11–12) is unconventional.

³⁶ Livy 8.7.16.

³⁷ Cf. Livy 5.49.

³⁸ Servius on 825.

³⁹ Livy 5.49.8–9.

⁴⁰ Livy 6.1.4.

⁴¹ Livy 5.50.1.

⁴² Cf. Burck (1934) 134.

⁴³ Livy 5.49.7.

⁴⁴ Ogilvie (1965) 739.

⁴⁵ Austin ad 830 f.

⁴⁶ *socer generique, perdidistis omnia?* (Catullus 29.24).

⁴⁷ *gener socerque, perdidistis omnia?* (6.6).

⁴⁸ *socerum depellere regno | decretum genero est* (Lucan 1.289–90); *gener atque socer bello contendere iussi* (Lucan 4.802); *non in soceri generique favorem | discedunt populi* (Lucan 10.417–18).

⁴⁹ *cum gener atque socer diris concurreret armis* (Martial 9.70.3).

⁵⁰ Austin ad 830 f.

⁵¹ Petronius 122.144–55.

⁵² Lucan 1.183.

⁵³ Norden ad 826 ff.

⁵⁴ According to Juvenal 10.166, Hannibal's crossing of the Alps was a topic of declamatory speeches.

⁵⁵ Perhaps his strange route via the Western regions of the Alps can be explained by an allusion to Hannibal's crossing?

⁵⁶ Syme (1939) 317.

⁵⁷ Incorrectly, this passage has widely been connected with Caesar's *clementia* towards the Pompeians since Servius' times (Norden: amnesty after the battle of Thapsus). The right interpretation is Feeney's (1986, 12): 'here Anchises is begging his descendant to lay down his arms first, before Pompey does.'

⁵⁸ Cf. Strasburger ((1983) 1990, 290): '...Octavian, der sich vom privaten Erben zum politischen Nachfolger hochstilisierte und Caesars Machtkampf gegen den eigenen Staat mit äußerster Härte und Verschlagenheit erneuerte.'

⁵⁹ Norden ad 826 ff.

⁶⁰ Frank (1938) 93.

⁶¹ 'Livy, like Virgil, was a Pompeian.' 'The term "Pompeianus", however, need not denote an adherent of Pompeius. The Romans lacked a word for "Republican" ' (Syme 1939, 464 with n. 2, with reference to Tac. *Ann.* 4.34).

⁶² Cf. Feeney (1986) 9: 'note that Augustus, by this arrangement, is one of the *reges*'.

⁶³ It is obvious that in connection with Mummius, Aemilius Paullus, Cato, Cossus, Scipio maior and minor, Fabricius, Serranus and Fabius Maximus Cunctator, *Gracchi* (842) (as well as *Fabii* (845)) denote representatives of this family in general and not the two reformers: Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (consul in 238 BC) fought in Sardinia, his son (consul in 215 and 213 BC) against Hannibal and Hanno, the father of the reformers (consul in 177 BC) in Spain and Sardinia (his achievements in war were praised by a eulogy in the Forum of Augustus; cf. Norden ad 842 f.). Cf. also Austin ad 842; Feeney (1986) 13.

⁶⁴ Maybe the perversion from external to internal wars is suggested by mentioning that Caesar came from Gaul and Pompey from the East (830–1).

⁶⁵ Fordyce ad 666 ff.

⁶⁶ Cf. Strasburger (1990).

⁶⁷ Binder (1971) 208.

⁶⁸ *Aeneid*: Dido (1.507), Jupiter (1.731), Aeneas (3.137), Acestes (5.758), Priamus (7.246–7); *Georgics*: Octavian (4.562). Cf. Binder (1971) 210–11.

⁶⁹ Vergil has created a unique picture. It inspired Dante to make Cato the guardian of the penitent in the first canto of his *Purgatorio*, even if he owes individual traits to Lucan (cf. Dante Alighieri, *Die göttliche Komödie*, Kommentar von H. Gmelin, II. Teil: Der Läuterungsberg, Stuttgart (1955) 33). Vergil presents Dante to the guardian Cato, who is characterized on this occasion (70–4):

Or ti piaccia gradir la sua venuta:
Libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara,
Come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta.
Tu il sai, chè non ti fu per lei amara
In Utica la morte.

⁷⁰ Cf. Horsfall (1995) 146.

⁷¹ Norden ad 752 ff.

⁷² 'In his youth Caesar's heir, the revolutionary adventurer, won Pompeian support by guile and coolly betrayed his allies, overthrowing the Republic and proscribing the Republicans: in his mature years the statesman stole their heroes and their vocabulary.' (Syme 1939, 317). Cf. also Norden ((1901) 1966, 372): 'Wohl niemals ist mit größerer Virtuosität als von Augustus die (übrigens für den römischen Nationalcharakter bezeichnende) Kunst geübt worden, unter dem Schein konstitutioneller, ja reaktionärer Formen eine faktische Neuordnung der Verhältnisse zu begründen, so daß die Umwandlung des Freistaats in den Prinzipat der Wiederherstellung der ältesten Einrichtungen eben dieses Freistaates glich.'

⁷³ *Res gestae* 1.1.

⁷⁴ It would be in line with Vergil's high esteem for Cato if he did allude to Cato in the simile in *Aen.* 1.148–52. Cf. Pöschl (1977) 20–1.

⁷⁵ Norden ad 752 ff.

⁷⁶ § 32. Cf. Servius on 6.861: *et constat hunc librum tanta pronuntiatione Augusto et Octaviae esse recitatum, ut fletu nimio imperarent silentium, nisi Vergilius finem esse dixisset.*

⁷⁷ Suetonius/Donatus § 28.

- ⁷⁸ Servius on *Aen.* 4.323.
⁷⁹ Norden ad 752 ff.
⁸⁰ Norden ad 826 ff.
⁸¹ Goold (1992) 118: 'The variety of intonation, tempo, and delivery called for would provide a gifted reader with abundant scope to move an audience.'
⁸² Cf. Lefèvre (1993) in general.
⁸³ Cf. Hanslik (1953) 282–7; Nisbet/Hubbard (1978) 151–8.
⁸⁴ Cf. Lefèvre (1993), 151–153.
⁸⁵ Syme (1939) 333.
⁸⁶ Kienast (1982) 88; cf. Syme (1939) 335.
⁸⁷ Syme (1939) 335; cf. Kienast (1982) 87: 'ein alter Republikaner'.
⁸⁸ Kienast (1982) 88.

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